

South Dakota National Guard

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NEWS RELEASE:

Officer Candidates experience land navigation

1st Lt. Paul Chapman
1st Battalion, 196th Regiment

FORT MEADE, S.D. – More than 100 officer candidates from 20 states and one territory completed the day and night land navigation practical exam, a requirement to become a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army National Guard, during Officer Candidate School Phase I, June 12, 2011, at Fort Meade.

These officer candidates, who fill the ranks of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion (Officer Candidate School), 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), were equipped with a map and coordinates and then required to find at least five out of seven points within three hours during the day. At night, Soldiers were given five coordinates and were required to find at least two of the points in three hours.

Land navigation is one of the first obstacles for candidates during Phase I.

“The hardest thing is passing land navigation,” said Maj. Bryan Fillinger, Missoula, Mont., the Phase I platoon training commander. “It’s the thing that sends the most people home.”

Soldiers must pass two practical exams to move on to the next phase of training.

Soldiers received four days of training prior to the exam. The training began in the classroom, where candidates learned how to read a map.

“The instructors started slowly, showing candidates how to plot points and what different terrain features look like on a map,” said Officer Candidate Phillip Rivera, Las Vegas, Nev.

At the conclusion of the initial lesson, candidates conducted an applied map reading exam. Afterwards, candidates who received a passing score were taken to a land navigation course on Fort Meade for a guided terrain association tour.

“They basically walked us through the course and showed us different terrain features... and that was really helpful,” said Rivera.

The next part of training involved pairing a team of candidates with an instructor, who shared the advice and experience to help candidates find specific coordinates on both day and night practice courses.

The last day of training was an individual practical exercise.

“It’s tough because most people don’t have much experience behind a compass,” said Fillinger. The requirements to pass the practical exercise were the same as the practical exam.

Although tired from long days of training, the candidates were in good spirits and motivated for the exam.

“The adrenaline is getting us through this because for Phase I, this is pretty much the hardest thing to get through,” said Rivera.

Candidates who pass both the day and night practical exam will continue training to become officers in the U. S. Army National Guard.

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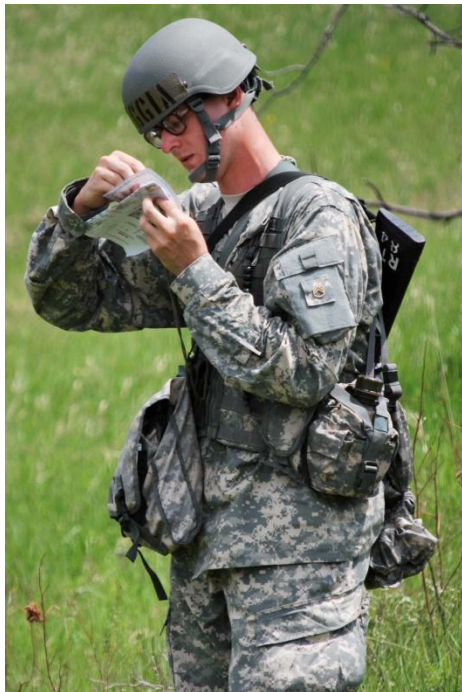
110612-A-SV372-023: FORT MEADE, S.D. – Staff Sgt. John Hodnett instructs officer candidates from Alpha Company, 1st Battalion (Officer Candidate School), 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) on how to fill out their score card for the night land navigation practical exam. The mission of the 1st Battalion, 196th Regiment RTI, during its eight-week officer candidate development program at Fort Meade, is to teach, assess and counsel more than 100 students from 20 states and one

territory attending the program to ensure they possess the physical, rational and ethical qualities required to be a United States Army National Guard officer. (SDNG photo by 1st Lt. Paul Chapman) (RELEASED)



110612-A-SV372-028: FORT MEADE, S.D. – Staff Sgt. John Hodnett passes out maps of Fort Meade’s land navigation course for the night land navigation practical exam to officer candidates from Alpha Company, 1st Battalion (Officer Candidate School), 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute). The mission of the 1st Battalion (Officer Candidate School), 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) during its eight-week officer candidate development program at Fort Meade is to teach, assess and counsel more than 100 students

from 20 states and one territory attending the program to ensure they possess the physical, rational and ethical qualities required to be a United States Army National Guard officer. (SDNG photo by 1st Lt. Paul Chapman) (RELEASED)



110612-A-3848G-043: FORT MEADE, S.D. – Officer Candidate David Ruggia, of Okla., checks his map during the day land navigation practical exam. Candidates must find at least five out of seven location markers to pass the exam. The mission of the 1st Battalion (Officer Candidate School), 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) during its eight-week officer candidate development program at Fort Meade is to teach, assess and counsel more than 100 students from 20 states and one territory attending the program to ensure they possess the physical, rational and ethical qualities required to be a United States Army National Guard officer. (SDNG photo by Spc. Alan Green) (RELEASED)



110612-A-3848G-045: FORT MEADE, S.D. – Officer Candidate Chukwuemeka Chukwurah, of Utah, reads a location marker's identification tag during the day land navigation practical exam. Candidates must find at least five out of seven location markers to pass the exam. The mission of the 1st Battalion (Officer Candidate School), 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) during its eight-week officer candidate development program at Fort Meade is to teach, assess and

counsel more than 100 students from 20 states and one territory attending the program to ensure they possess the physical, rational and ethical qualities required to be a United States Army National Guard officer. (SDNG photo by Spc. Alan Green) (RELEASED)



110612-A-3848G-047: FORT MEADE, S.D. – Officer Candidate Rocky Katsunai, of Nev., climbs over a fence while trying to find a location marker during the day land navigation practical exam. Candidates must find at least five out of seven location markers to pass the exam. The mission of the 1st Battalion (Officer Candidate School), 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) during its eight-week officer candidate development program at Fort Meade is to teach, assess and counsel

more than 100 students from 20 states and one territory attending the program to ensure they possess the physical, rational and ethical qualities required to be a United States Army National Guard officer. (SDNG photo by Spc. Alan Green) (RELEASED)

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